**Annual Report from NCABS, 2023~**

This year has been a very full and rewarding (and, perhaps, even "sobering') year for NCABS, Inc., as we attempted to "cover" the whole State of NC with **Black** ***STORYTELLING!***

We began the year with a (repeat, but still enlightening) past national-episode of **Madafo Lloyd Wilson's *NPR/PRI - “A Season's Griot”…***sponsored by **WHQR Radio** of Wilmington, NC. Then, in the Wake Co./Raleigh area, several members were asked to participate in ***The Fruits of Labor*** Kwanzaa celebration, ~while **Linda Gorham**entertained a community-wide audience at Raleigh's (***Children's)*** ***First Night***event on New Year's Eve.

At the end of January, NCABS was delighted to spend a day sharing "Storytelling" to approx. 30,000 school kids from across the State of NC...(hosted/sponsored by the ***NC Museum of History ...***for their ***Annual*** ***Education Day*** ) via ***on-line*** to schools across the State of NC and beyond. At the end of January, NCABS then told stories at the day-long ***African American Cultural Celebration*** to an auditorium filled with eager *in-house* listeners at the ***NC Museum of History.***

Also, in January, we received a request for a storyteller ***to tell***in Cherokee, NC (in the western mountains) at an NC Ranger's "rest stop"... just off Interstate 40W highway!**Carolyn Williams (aka) *Currieart)***stepped up to take that day-long job near the NC/Tennessee border.

In February, the ***Cameron Art Museum*** continued its yearly commemoration of the ***Battle of Forks Road***,...where ***US Colored Troops***  (USCT soldiers) did a reenactment of the battle which won the **Civil War**in City of Wilmington, NC. Several of our NCABS members are active participants with the USCT.

In April, a request for storytellers to be a part of ***A&T State Univ's*** first

day-long community “***Read a Book”***event for kids.***Pat Lambe (Patticake)***, ***Currieart***, **Obakunle Akinlana and Mitch "*Granddaddy Junebug*" Capel**were the participants. Also, in the Spring, NCABS was invited to participant in Storytelling at the ***Earl Scruggs Center***in Shelby, NC. Those participants were actor/orator ***Michael Conner, Obakunle Akinlana, filmmaker Teri Burnette and Beverly Fields Burnette.***

With the ***Pope House*** in downtown Raleigh being on the **National Register of Historic Houses**,...the City of Raleigh requested a storyteller for a downtown youth event...and they were delighted with ***Pat Lambe***, who shared her great skills/and magic on behalf of NCABS, Inc.

***Eleanora E. Tate*** presented stories about her book ***"The Secret of Gumbo Grove"***to an appreciative audience on Oct. 8 in Myrtle Beach, SC. The program, sponsored by the City of Myrtle Beach, SC featured the restored **Oak Street Cemetery** there. The African American cemetery was the fictionalized subject of Ms. Tate's award-winning book. Ms. Tate also signed copies of her books. NOTE: Myrtle Beach was the host site for the 1991 ***9th Annual National Festival of Black Storytelling!***

***Donna Washington***graced the USA and beyond with numerous engagements, and brought smiles to MANY audiences of all ages. ***Willa Brigham*** reports that she was extremely  busy with approx. 150 performances throughout the year, and that she sold 7750 copies of her book *"****The Pizza Tree"!******Jackie Pittman***has continued to share past/local historic tales/stories, as well as her vocal talents with her community regarding historic run-away enslaved person from the Halifax community.

In MID-MAY...several drummers, storytellers and long-time friends of

***Baba Jamal Koram, the Storyman*** celebrated (on his behalf) at a Charlotte, NC Library...

where he and others enjoyed the dancing, drumming, celebrating and Storytelling of personal friends, life-long companions and drummers at a local library in Jamal's behalf! Jamal and his **very early *life-long* companions**launched, and shared/ and signed a book that they had written/co-authored...regarding their early years together in the State of New York.

FUQUAY VARINA’s resident Artist***Pinkie Strother***had an art exhibit for the second time at the ***<***[***moremengallery710@pb08.wixemails.com***](mailto:moremengallery710@pb08.wixemails.com)***>~ i.e.,*** **Kentucky Art Museum**...which due to Pinkie's extraordinary talent and artistry...a community member ended up purchasing her artistic work (and gave it ***to and for*** the local Black community) for an "***unmentionable"*** amount of money$$$!

***Carolyn Evans*** has recently enjoyed portraying the historic life and contributions of**Mary McLeod Bethune!**

**Our newer members, Bernard and Laura Carson (who live in Greenville, NC) have been getting acquainted with a creative group of young storytellers and poets called *The Black Creatives of Pitt County* in Greenville/East Carolina Univ.'s Dept of Communications.**

**Bernard reports that he told stories at ECU in January, February and March of this year. We hope to gain a newer/younger group of members from this fresh collegiate connection!**

During this year's **Labor Day (2023)** celebration in downtown Raleigh,***The Two Bells,*** ***Gran'daddy Junebug, Thomasi McDonald and Beverly Fields Burnette***participated in the huge **Annual Fayetteville Street ( Raleigh,NC) Labor Day** event.

Sadly, just at the end of September, we learned of the very serious, life-ending injury sustained by ***Madafo Lloyd Wilson***of Wilmington...and, after his transition, several NCABS members journeyed to Wilmington to attend his huge community-wide services/celebration of his life,...which was held at Wilmington's lovely **Cameron Art Museum.** Madafo's daughters, his grandchildren and his local band/combo celebrated his artistic contributions, his life-long talents and gifts with their renditions of drumming, poetry and music.

***Rest in Peace*, o*l' 'Storytelling Soldier***...as you will ***never ever*** be forgotten by the communities that heard your stories, and danced to your drums!

Note: An event, which has been in the planning stages for over 20 years, is the development of **Raleigh's Freedom Monument Park**. Until the creation of this monument, there was no African American *representation* in the governmental section of  NC’s Capitol City. This park  (designed by the late **Phil Freelon** of the architectural firm of **Perkins + Will**) was chosen to create a meaningful, dramatic design for the Park. The plan features five walkways leading to a 45-foot-tall ***Beacon of Freedo*m** at the Park’s center.  It was unveiled and presented on Aug. 23, 2023, and stands not far from the NC State Capitol Building, and the NC Governor's Mansion. (Note: NCABS' own President...Beverly Fields Burnette... served on the **Freedom Park** planning committee for over 20 yrs.) ~

AND NOW…we are ALREADY excitedly planning the upcoming **AACC.**..(**African American Cultural Celebration)**for January 2024... ***jest* one MO' time!**

NOTE: **OUR earnest and warm “CONGRATS” and continued VERY BEST wishes** to **Sista Elisha Minter** for her great recovery…following serious surgeries/procedures soon after last year's (Baltimore’s ) NABS Conference/Festival!!! ***Keep on keeping ON, my Sista!***

Respectfully submitted by:

Beverly Fields Burnette,

President of NC Assoc of Black  Storytellers, Inc.

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